

Serial No.: 09/741,986

Attorney's Docket No.: 10559/376001/P10182

Amendment to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A software management system, comprising:

a vendor package template that provides a script to install, upgrade, and remove at least one software package;

a package importer to receive said at least one software package, where said package importer creates an X-package document based on said vendor package template in preparation for later software distribution and installation, and said package importer creates said X-package in a format that makes said X-package manageable in a software package management system independent of vendor-specific aspects of the at least one software package; and

a package agent to receive, deploy and execute said X-package at a target computer;

wherein the script comprises a list of commands in a programming language.

2. (previously presented) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said package importer receives an importing user identity for recording.

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3. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said at least one software package includes packages  
from different vendors.

4. (original) The software management system of claim 3,  
wherein said X-package includes a substantially uniform set of  
attributes that allows said at least one software packages to be  
managed in a single user interface.

5. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said package importer tags said X-package with a  
signature.

6. (original) The software management system of claim 5,  
further comprising:

an authentication element to provide verification of the X-  
package by validating the signature in the X-package with a list  
of certificates trusted by the target computer.

7. (original) The software management system of claim 6,  
further comprising:

a script extractor to extract an X-package script.

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8. (original) The software management system of claim 7,  
wherein said X-package script includes logic for interacting  
with a vendor-specific package agent.

9. (original) The software management system of claim 7,  
wherein said X-package script includes logic for interacting  
with multiple operating systems.

10. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said X-package further includes a name of a user who  
imported said at least one software package.

11. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said X-package further includes hash of package files  
included in said at least one software package.

12. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said package agent checks relevant operating system of  
said at least one software package.

13. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said package agent downloads any needed files.

14. (original) The software management system of claim 1,  
wherein said package agent reports status.

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15. (currently amended) A software management system, comprising:  
a distribution management server including:  
a vendor package template that provides a script to install, upgrade, and remove at least one software package, said script comprising a list of commands in a programming language; and

a package importer to receive said at least one software package, said package importer creates an X-package document based on said vendor package template in preparation for later software distribution and installation, where said package importer tags said X-package with a signature and said package importer creates said X-package in a format that makes said X-package manageable in a software package management system independent of vendor-specific aspects of the at least one software package;

a plurality of target computers, each target computer including:

an authentication element to provide verification of the X-package by validating the signature in the X-package with a list of certificates trusted by the target computer;

a script extractor to extract an X-package script; and

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a package agent to receive, deploy and execute said X-package at the target computer.

16. (original) The software management system of claim 15, wherein said at least one software package includes packages from different vendors.

17. (original) The software management system of claim 16, wherein said X-package includes a substantially uniform set of attributes that allows said at least one software packages to be managed in a single user interface.

18. (currently amended) A method for distributing vendor-specific software to target computers, comprising:

importing the vendor-specific software using a vendor package template to create an X-package having a script in preparation for later software distribution and installation, said script comprising a list of commands in a programming language, and said importing comprising creating said X-package in a format that makes said X-package manageable in a software package management system independent of vendor-specific aspects of the at least one software package;

transferring said X-package to target computers; and processing said X-package script.

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19. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising:  
authenticating the X-package by validating a signature on  
said X-package.

20. (original) The method of claim 18, further comprising:  
extracting the script from said X-package for processing.

21. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said  
processing said X-package script includes checking a relevant  
operating system of the vendor-specific software.

22. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said  
processing said X-package script includes downloading all  
relevant files.

23. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein said  
processing said X-package script includes reporting status.

24. (currently amended) An apparatus comprising a machine-  
readable storage medium having executable instructions operable  
to cause one or machines to perform operations comprising:  
import vendor-specific software using a vendor package  
template to create an X-package having a script in preparation  
for later software distribution and installation, said script  
comprising a list of commands in a programming language, and

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said import comprising creating said X-package in a format that makes said X-package manageable in a software package management system independent of vendor-specific aspects of the at least one software package;

transfer said X-package to target computers; and process said X-package script.

25. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the operations further comprise:

authenticate the X-package by validating a signature on said X-package.

26. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the operations further comprise:

extract the script from said X-package for processing.

27. (previously presented) The software management system of claim 1, wherein said X-package document includes Extensible Markup Language (XML).

28. (previously presented) The software management system of claim 2, wherein said package importer verifies the importing user identity by checking an access control list.